Weaving the face of Christ: on the textile origins of the Christian image

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The miraculous appearance of the true likeness of Christ, the acheiropoietic imprint of his visage on a piece of cloth, the *vera icon*, counts among the medieval and early modern Christian exemplars of painterly representation, whose iconological meaning Hans Belting, Gerhard Wolf, and others have investigated.[1] Already in 1991, Victor Stoichita contributed a primary analysis of the entanglement of art theory and image theology in the case of Francisco de Zurbarán's *lienzos sagrados,* those *trompe-l'oeil* canvases blotted with divine blood, which explicate the double nature of the Eucharist as

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[1] Freedberg, D. *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago: UCP, 1989, 205–212. Belting, H. *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image before the Era of Art*. Transl. Jephcott, E. Chicago: UCP, 1994 [or. ed.: id., *Bild und Kult. Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1990]. Koerner, J. L. *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*. Chicago: UCP, 1993, 63–126. *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation.* Eds. Kessler, H. L. and Wolf, G. Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1998. *Il volto di Cristo.* Eds. Morello, G. and Wolf, G. Milan: Electa, 2000. Krüger, K. *Das Bild als Schleier des Unsichtbaren. Ästhetische Illusion in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit in Italien*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2001. Wolf, G. *Schleier und Spiegel. Traditionen des Christusbildes und die Bildkonzepte der Renaissance*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2002. Kruse, C., *Wozu Menschen malen. Historische Begründungen eines Bildmediums*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2003, 269–306. *Mandylion. Intorno al Sacro Volto, da Bisanzio a Genova.* Eds. Wolf, G., Dufour Bozzo, C. and Calderoni Masetti, A. R. Milan: Skira, 2004. *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance.* Eds. Thunø, E. and Wolf, G. Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, 2004. Belting, H. *Das echte Bild. Bildfragen als Glaubensfragen*. Munich, C. H. Beck, 2006 [1st ed.: Munich: C. H. Beck, 2005]. *L'immagine di Cristo. Dall'Acheropita alla mano d'artista. Dal tardo medioevo all'età barocca.* Eds. Frommel, C. L. and Wolf, G. Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2006.

an image and substance, a "white veil of bread."[2] The following exploration of the specific materiality of the Holy Face, more precisely its "textility," wishes to contribute to a general iconology of artistic materials.[3]

In terms of a transcendent *paragone*, divine self-portraits "not made by hands" challenge the notion of painting as human handiwork. Still, it is this sublime *difficoltà,* which gives art the opportunity to ennoble itself by means of a rhetorical expression of conscious and conspicuous self-effacement.[4] In his *Head of Christ* (Fig. 1), Correggio does not replicate or imitate a "real," imprinted, and disfigured self-portrait of the Savior, one of the historical, but illegible contact relics. Nor does he depict one of its popular, mass-reproduced, a-historical, but intelligible counterfeits. Rather, as a marker of biblical antiquity, he uses a freestanding, philosopher-type portrait bust, turning towards and looking just past the viewer, and fuses it with a modern physiognomy similar to Michelangelo's *Redeemer*.[5] Christ appears detached, removed from the narrative context of the Passion, which we are to imagine roaring around him. The only allusions to his divine destiny are a red rivulet running down his neck and a single lock of blood-soaked hair. The crown of thorns, curved elegantly around the forehead like a diadem, acts as a violent *repoussoir,* painfully tearing the figure from the undulating white ground. The Holy Face does not cast a shadow onto the folded veil, because the *sudarium*, as much as the flesh itself, is a shadowing of God.[6]

By 1500, the idea of God's artistry had long since developed to the point where the *vera icon* was considered as a divine self-portrait, which in return ennobled the mimetic, self-effacing art of fine paint-

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[2] Stoichita, V. I. "Zurbaráns Veronika." *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte,* 1991, vol. 54, 2, 190–206, here 201.

[3] See further references on the textile medium in my "[Notes From the Field: Material]."*The Art Bulletin,* March 2013, vol. 95, 1, 34–37, and "Textile Medien." *Handbuch Medienwissenschaft.* Ed. Schröter, J. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2014, 234–238.

[4] Cf. Stoichita, V. I. *The Self-Aware Image. An Insight into Early Modern Meta-Painting*. Cambridge: CUP, 1997 [or. ed.: id: *L'instauration du tableau. Métapeinture à l'aube des Temps modernes*. Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 1993]. See references on the *paragone* in Varchi, B. *Paragone – Rangstreit der Künste.* Eds. Bätschmann, O. and Weddigen, T. Darmstadt: WBG, 2013.

[5] For a high-resolution image of Correggio's *Head of Christ*, see Google Art Project (http://www.googleartproject.com). Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Redeemer*, 1519/21, sculpted marble, 205 cm, Rome, Santa Maria sopra Minerva.

[6] Kessler, H. L. "Christ's Dazzling Dark Face." Masetti/Bozzo/Wolf 2007 (see note 1): 231–246.

1. Correggio, *Head of Christ,* circa 1525/30, oil on panel, 28.6 x 23.5 cm, Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 94.PB.74 (photograph The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles).

ing, as in the case of Albrecht Dürer's Munich *Self-Portrait*.[7] Yet by creating an outspokenly handcrafted interpretation and adaption of the celestial painter's material self-portrait, Correggio openly ab-

[7] Koerner 1993 (see note 1). Cf. e.g. Butzbach, J. *Von den berühmten Malern. 1505. Mit der Urschrift in Nachbildung.* Ed. Pelka, O. Heidelberg: Richard Weissbach, 1925, 49 and 52. Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, 1500, oil on panel, 66.3 x 49 cm, Munich, Alte Pinakothek.

stains from naturalistic imitation and needless competition with the ultimate artist, who miraculously produced his counter-image without the use of his human hands, or indeed any other tool.[8] Similarly, probably for the Holy Year of 1525, the woodcutter Ugo da Carpi executed a *Veronica* for the Volto Santo ciborium in Saint Peter's Basilica, explicitly "senza penello," with his bare fingers and coal dust.[9] His work thus stressed the humble, human manufacture of his faithful reproduction of the flat, archaic, and notably obscured *acheiropoieton* locked in its showcase, instead of following the more sculptural preparatory drawing Parmigianino had delivered for the altarpiece. Ugo, thus, applied a technological kind of authentication by imitating the process of the reproduction itself, rather than just the subject, the imprint of the Holy Face.

Whereas the strength of painting lies in its ability to feign and express sculptural *rilievo*, a physical impression would only document the blind, tactile impact of a solid, wet object's edges on a soft, absorbent cloth. Yet God's imprint is of another kind.[10] In Correggio's panel, where the purple cape vanishes in a *pentimento*, at first sight Veronica's linen seems to turn into a white robe, as if enveloping what the shroud is supposed to reveal. At these lower edges of the image, the supernatural plasticity of the head of Christ, which denies the expected underlying plane marks of blood, flattens out again and dissolves. Here, the fictive support of the image,

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[8] Cf. Belting 1994 (see note 1): 343, on Giusto de' Menabuoi's allegedly imperfect copy of an icon by Saint Luke.

[9] Vasari, G. *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori ed architettori* [1568], in: id., *Le opere.* Ed. Milanesi, G. 9 vols. Florence: Sansoni, 1906, vol. 1–7, here vol. 5, 421 Harprath, R. in *Raffaello in Vaticano.* Ed. Pietrangeli, C. Milan: Electa, 1984, 324–325. Didi-Huberman, G. *Devant l'image*. Paris: Éditions de minuit, 1990, 225–238. Blackwood, N. "Printmaker as Painter: Looking Closely at Ugo da Carpi's *Saint Veronica Altarpiece.*" *Oxford Art Journal,* 2013, vol. 36, 2, 167–184. Ugo da Carpi, *Veronica With Saints Peter and Paul*, circa 1424/27, tempera and charcoal on panel, 158 x 145 cm, Vatican City, Fabbrica di San Pietro. Parmigianino, *Veronica with the Saints Peter and Paul,* circa 1525, drawing, 17.1 x 16.9 cm, Florence, Uffizi, Gabinetto dei disegni e delle stampe, inv. 13554 F.

[10] Cf. Marin, L. "The Figurability of the Visual: The Veronica or the Question of the Portrait at Port-Royal." *New Literary History. A Journal of Theory and Interpretation,* 1991, vol. 22, 281–296 [or. ed.: id. "Figurabilité du visuel: la Véronique ou la question du portrait à Port-Royal." *Nouvelle revue de psychanalyse.* 1987, vol. 35, 51–65]. Cf. James Tissot's *Veronica* of 1896, which shows the imprint of Christ's hands in reverse, in: Kaenel, P. "Le voile imagé. La *vera icon* de Claude Mellan à Elisabeth Ohlson." *Metatextile: Identity and History of a Contemporary Art Medium.* Ed. Weddigen, T. Emsdetten/Berlin: Edition Imorde, 2010, 13–27.

that seemingly unfolded veil, is fraying, and the pictorial illusion of divine presence vanishes in the manual traces and imprints of the painter's brush. The threads of the canvas and the hair of the brush coalesce in a simulated indexical correspondence between the textile medium imbued with the image and the painting that produces both. While the authenticity and power of the *vera icon,* that image at the borderline of levels of reality, does not consist in a naturalistic representation, in the trace, the painter, antithetically, exposes his brushwork as a mark of candid faking. The material disintegration and fraying of the paradigmatic and paradoxical veil underscores that the true, metaphysical *vera icon* is neither identical with nor dependent on its material support, as little as God is on human flesh.[11] Rather than the visual document of an imprint, the naturalistic Holy Face is a depiction of the prototype the beholder is called on to imagine, so as to fill the absence left by the mark.[12] The figure is not in the fabric; rather, the true image is a pious Rorschach test.

As with images made by chance or by nature, the collective imaginary enlivens the blot and fills the void with the help of disseminated, conventional motifs – perhaps a reason why *acheiropoieta* flourish in the early age of mechanical reproduction.[13] In a *contrapposto*, the apparition of Christ hovers above the folds. The Incarnation is a reduction of infinity to the finite, a loss of dimensions. Similarly, painting diminishes the solid body to a flat picture, thus illustrating the pictoriality of Incarnation and the Eucharistic nature of Christian painting.[14] The supernatural essence or fourth dimension of the Holy

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[11] Cf. Walker Bynum, C. *Christian Materiality. An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe.* New York: Zone Books, 2011.

[12] Schlie, H. "Abdruck und Einschnitt – die medialen Träger der Spur als *appendicia exteriora* des Christuskörpers." *Bildwelten des Wissens. Kunsthistorisches Jahrbuch für Bildkritik.* 2010, vol. 8, no. 1, 83–94. Cf. Didi-Huberman, G., "Face, proche, lointain: l'empreinte du visage et le lieu pour apparaître." Kessler/Wolf 1998 (see note 1): 95–108, and Mondzain, M. J. "The Holy Shroud / How Invisible Hands Weave the Undecidable." *Iconoclash. Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Art.* Eds. Latour, B. and Weibel, P. Karlsruhe: Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, 2002, 324–335.

[13] Cf. Kruse, C. "Vera Icon – oder die Leerstelle des Bildes." *Quel corps? Eine Frage der Repräsentation.* Eds. Belting, H. Kamper, D. and Schulz, M. Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2002, 105–129.

[14] Cf. Wolf, G. "Die andere Haut. Perspektiven einer historischen Anthropologie von Bild und Medium in der abendländischen Kultur der frühen Neuzeit." *Gesichter der Haut.* Ed. Geissmar-Brandi, C. et al. Frankfurt am Main/Basel: Stroemfeld, 2002,

Face is made comprehensible to the human eye with the help of a visual *similitudo* and, more precisely, by adding one spatial dimension to the flatness of the canvas, thus adopting a stratagem of extension by reduction. In addressing the figure's ground, Correggio's panel may have been inspired by Hans Burgkmair's woodcut, circa 1508/15, presenting itself as a signed artistic reproduction of the *sudarium.* It is seemingly pinned to the wall, as the woodcut itself would usually be, thus asserting the dignity of the reproductive medium with the help of a *mise en abyme* of the *vera icon,* that emblem of printing.[15] Thanks to its paradoxical structure, the Holy Face, as a conceptual and visual *perpetuum mobile* and "reversible figure," most effectively conveys the double nature of Christ.[16] God made himself visible in the guise of suffering flesh, in order to feed the human desire for the *visio beatifica*, the apocalyptic "face to face," beyond the bloodstained mask of this world.[17] Correggio also alludes to Parrhasios' painted curtain, that self-denying and self-revealing painting, an artists' trap suggesting that pious painting can only do justice to its impossible task and elevate itself to agnostic though eloquent silence by truthfully exposing its own deficiency and the mere "paintedness" of its representations.[18]

Like Correggio and Zurbarán, early modern artists, both before and after introducing canvas as a painting support, reflected on the textility of the *vera icon* in relation to their own artistic making. This inevitably led some of them to interpret the Holy Face literally, as a material imprint, and, quite daringly, to twist and fold the mark or visage of God, as did Lorenzo Costa, Hieronymus Bosch, Otto Vae-

233–247. Didi-Huberman, G. *L'image ouverte. Motifs de l'incarnation dans les arts visuels*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2007. Bredekamp, H. *Theorie des Bildaktes*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010, 173–178.

[15] *Sixteenth Century German Artists: Hans Burgkmair, the Elder, Hans Schäufelein, Lucas Cranach, the Elder.* Ed. Falk, T. New York: Abaris Books, 1980 (*The Illustrated Bartsch,* vol. 11, formerly 7.2), F.57 22 (207).

[16] Similarly, but from a Protestant symbolist point of view, Sigmar Polke recently reinterpreted the "Rubin vase" as a chalice in his Son of Man stained glass windows in the Zurich Grossmünster. See *Sigmar Polke. Fenster/windows, Grossmünster, Zürich.* Ed. Lambert, C. Zurich/New York: Parkett Publishers, 2010, here 68 and 156–157.

[17] Cf. Walker Bynum, C. *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. Vettori, A. "Dante's Pilgrimage from Image to Vision." *Dante Studies,* 2003, no. 121, 43–64. Schellewald, B. "Aër-Epitaphioi in Byzanz: Tuch – Körper – Christus." *Beziehungsreiche Gewebe. Textilien im Mittelalter*. Eds. Böse, K. and Tammen, S. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012, 323–351.

[18] Pliny, *Natural History,* 35:65–66. Cf. Krüger 2001 (see note 1).

nius, Bernardo Strozzi, and Mattia Preti.[19] However, a more direct comment on the textile medium and materiality is to be expected in the case of woven images of the *sancta facies*. Only a handful of examples survive. They belong to the small-scale devotional tapestries, which Elizabeth Cleland has recently brought to scholars' attention.[20] These tapestries, which were probably unique, may have been produced by individual weavers, and achieved the artfulness of embroidery, goldsmith's work, or intarsia. Displayed most likely upon domestic altars and for the purpose of private devotion, these woven images won appreciation among the European nobility of the late fifteenth century, and were, thanks to their transportability, particularly suitable as courtly gifts. One of the 64 known pieces is the *Straus Veronica*, an exquisite, small-scale Flemish tapestry of the High Renaissance (Fig. 2).

Here, the graceful Saint Veronica is reverently holding the thin *velum* by two strings, presenting the Holy Face to the viewer.[21] After centuries of conflation and competition among legends, objects, images, locations, and cults, the present type, from the late peak of Veronica's prodigious career, cannot be clearly assigned to any one specific tradition.[22] Whether the icon arises from the narrative, or

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[19] Lorenzo Costa, *Saint Veronica,* 1508, oil on panel, 65 x 54 cm, Paris, musée du Louvre, inv. R.F. 1989–15. Hieronymus Bosch, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, 1510/16, oil on panel, 76.7 x 83.5 cm, Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten. Otto Vaenius, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, oil on panel, early 17th century, 214 x 152 cm, Brussels, Musées royaux des beaux-arts de Belgique, inv. 238. Bernardo Strozzi, *Saint Veronica*, 1620/25, oil on canvas, 168 x 118 cm, Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. P00354. Mattia Preti, *Saint Veronica with the Veil,* circa 1655/60, oil on canvas, 100 x 75 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, inv. M.84.20.

[20] See Cleland, E. "Small-Scale Devotional Tapestries – Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, Part 1: An Overview." *Studies in the Decorative Arts.* 2009, vol. 16, no. 2, 115–140. Id. " Small-Scale Devotional Tapestries – Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, Part 2: The 'Mystic Grapes Group.'" Ibid., 141–164.

[21] Kendrick, A. F. "A Brussels Tapestry." *Apollo. A Journal of the Arts,* 1935, vol. 22, July-December, 280–281. *Catalogue*. Ed. Sotheby's. London: Sotheby's, 1963. Auction, London, December 13, 1964, 18.

[22] Grimm, W. K. "Die Sage vom Ursprung der Christusbilder." *Abhandlungen der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin,* 1842, 121–175. Pearson, K. *Die Fronica. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Christusbildes im Mittelalter*. Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1887. Dobschütz, E. von. *Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christilichen Legende*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1899. Egger C. "Papst Innocenz III. und die Veronica. Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Seelsorge." Kessler/Wolf 1998 (see note 1): 181–203. Bacci, M. "Alla ricerca del volto di Cristo." *Gesù. Il corpo, il volto nell'arte*. Ed. Verdon, T. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2010, 91–95.

2. Flemish (Brussels), *Saint Veronica Holding the Sudarium (Straus Veronica),* circa 1500/20, wool, silk, silver-gilt and silver-wrapped weft threads, 93 x 67 cm, sold at Sotheby's, London, New Bond Street, December 13, 1963, lot 75, formerly Straus Collection, current location unknown (photograph The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 97.P.7).

vice versa, the present portrait in a landscape nevertheless suggests that Veronica, on the way to Golgotha, has just received the *vera*

3. Workshop of Pieter de Pannemaker, after Bernard van Orley, *Crucifixion,* circa 1525/28, wool, silk, silver-gilt and silver-wrapped weft threads, 336 x 334 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, inv. 2476 (photograph SKD).

icon, after drying the blood, sweat, and spit from Christ's face with a handkerchief.[23]

In early modern visual art, Veronica may interact compassionately with Christ as he carries the Cross. Otherwise she appears as an isolated figure in the crowd on the *via crucis* (Fig. 3), not unlike the *festaiuola* of a *storia sacra,* presenting Christ's last portrait *dal vivo* to the viewer, a symbol of visionary presence, a figure looked at and

[23] Cf. Ringbom, S. *Icon to Narrative. The Rise of the Dramatic Close-Up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting*. 2nd ed. Doornspijk: Davaco, 1984 [1st ed.: Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1965].

staring back, at once shadowed and shining, object and subject.[24] Concerning the compressed iconographic environment, in the *Straus Veronica* (Fig. 2) the landscape might refer to Jerusalem and Calvary, the brewing clouds to the Crucifixion, the flowers to the healing power of the *volto santo*, and the sprouting dead trunk to the Resurrection, when man will finally see the true face of God. However, the *effigies* does not show the Man of Sorrows, the blood-stained *facies pietatis* fabricated on the *via dolorosa*, but rather the transfigured and blissful Mandylion type of the *facies maiestatis*, offering a preview of the apocalyptic Revelation.[25] The coarser *Wildenstein Veronica* (Fig. 4) instead presents an embroidered flat handkerchief and displays the projecting likeness of the *vir dolorum,* who is chased and tormented by the heathen and the Jews, as is the owl by the angry birds in the woven frame.[26] However, the two principal Western textual traditions, the one of the *sancta facies* and the other of the *facies pietatis*, cannot be clearly separated at this point in the iconographic history of the *sudarium*. Still, as some formal similarities such as the long hair suggest, the *Straus Veronica* may follow and benefit from the authority of the Mandylion type represented by the *Sainte Face* of Laon. For this miraculous Slavic icon had been sent from Rome by the later pope Urban IV in 1249 to the nunnery of Montreuil-les-Dames, situated between Paris and Brussels, as a substitute for the *Veronica* of Saint Peter's Basilica, which the nuns had requested in vain.[27]

The transfigured, blissful face of Christ in the *Straus Veronica* (Fig. 2) refers to the account, canonized by Jacob of Voragine's most successful *Golden Legend,* which relates the creation of a supernatural painting on canvas rather than a plasmatic imprint.[28] The matron

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[24] Cf. Baxandall, M. *Painting and Experience in* ***Fifteenth Century Italy. A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style***. Oxford: OUP, 1972, 72–76. Wolf, G. "From Mandylion to Veronica: Picturing the 'Disembodied' Face and Disseminating the True Image of Christ in the Latin West." Kessler/Wolf 1998 (see note 1): 153–179.

[25] Chastel, A. "La Véronique." *Revue de l'art,* 1978, no. 40–41, 71–82. Belting 1991 (see note 1): 208–224. Kessler H. L. "Il mandylion." Morello/Wolf 2000 (see note 1): 67–76.

[26] Kendrick 1935 (see note 21). Cf. Aristotle, *Historia animalium,* 9.1.

[27] Grabar, A. *La Sainte face de Laon. Le mandylion dans l'art orthodoxe*. Prague: Seminarium Kondakovianum, 1931. Dobschütz 1899 (see note 22): 297*.

[28] Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea vulgo historia lombardica dicta ad optimum librorum fidem*. Ed. Graesse, T. 3rd ed. Breslau: Koebner, 1890 [1st ed.: Dresden/Leipzig: Arnold, 1846], 232–233. Cf. Bacci, M. "Epigoni orientali e occidentali dell'immagine di Cristo 'non fatta da mano d'uomo'." Frommel/Wolf 2006 (see note 1): 43–60.

4. Flemish (Brussels), *Saint Veronica Holding the Sudarium (Wildenstein Veronica),* circa 1500/20, wool, silk, silver-wrapped weft threads, 79 x 56 cm, sold at Christie's, London, King Street, December 14, 2005, auction 7171, lot 78, formerly Wildenstein Collection, current location unknown (photograph The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 97.P.7.).

Veronica, who was close to Jesus, desired his painted *imago* as solace (*solatium*) in his absence. As she was carrying the piece of linen (*linteum*) to a painter's workshop, she happened to encounter him on her way. Having heeded her request, he took the blank fabric

5. Flemish (Brussels), *Emperor Vespasian Cured by Veronica's Veil,* circa 1510, wool, silk, gilt-metal-wrapped weft threads, 344 cm x 343 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, inv. 1975.1.1914 (photograph The Metropolitan Museum of Art).

and returned it to her, now miraculously inscribed with his holy face (*pannum venerabili sua facie insignitum*). Later, Emperor Vespasian (or sometimes Tiberius), suffering from an incurable illness, asked for the physician from Jerusalem, who was said to heal by word alone (*solo verbo*), unaware that Jesus had meanwhile already been crucified. As a visual *ersatz* for the living and healing word, Veronica brought the Holy Face to Rome. It is presented as an *imago* that cures only if beheld with devotion (*imaginem devote intuere, perspicere*), an object that gold and silver cannot buy.

As in the Brussels tapestry, lavishly illustrating the same legend drawn from the *Vindicta Salvatoris* (Fig. 5), the Emperor had the streets covered with silk cloths (*pannis sericis*) upon Veronica's ar-

rival.[29] Accompanied by the imperial adjutant Volusian, she pulls the *pannum* out of its travel coffer, as if re-enacting Christ's Resurrection with a fetish. While the courtiers look on in astonishment and with all the ignorance of the hairy lapdog, the bed-sick Emperor, supported by his son Titus, demonstrates the requisite pious contemplation. It is the inner, immaterial view that heals, not the outer sight, the uroscopy of the *physicus* in the background. Veronica's insistence on beholding the Holy Face with a "sentiment of devotion" (*affectus devotionis*), so as to achieve comfort and relief, describes the function and form of the debated medieval "Andachtsbild."[30] In the tapestry, contrasting with the surrounding rich textiles, the humble, semitransparent cloth, through which Veronica's physique and garb can be clearly discerned, verges on renouncing its status as material so as to enhance the presence of the Holy Face. The image materializes and disbands into a carpet of different *hachures,* which, for instance, represent Christ's curls in the diaphanous *pannum.* The compelling depiction of Christ's hair and beard, which are finer than the yarns of the tapestry, on a seemingly semitransparent cloth refers to Apelles' anecdote of the "line-within-a-line-within-a-line" and point at the similarly miraculous ability of the warp and weft to represent the impossible and surmount their aesthetic limits without breaking their own rules.[31] Similarly, Giorgio Vasari would call Raphael's tapestries of the *Acts of the Apostles* "paintings" and "miracles," "works not made by human artifice."[32] He also singles out a self-portrait, painted with watercolors on translucent cambric, which Dürer sent to Raphael and which may have employed a similar effect as the present woven *sudarium,* whereby the *apparitio* of the figure lies neither on the surface nor behind the picture plane, but hovers in an ambivalent space of its own.[33]

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[29] Mayer Thurman, C. C. *European Textiles in the Robert Lehman Collection.* New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001, 3–7.

[30] Panofsky, E. "'Imago pietatis'. Ein Beitrag zur Typengeschichte des 'Schmerzensmanns' und der 'Maria Mediatrix.'" *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstage*. Leipzig: Seemann, 1927, 261–308. Belting, H. *The Image and Its Public in the Middle Ages: Form and Function of Early Paintings of the Passion.* Athens: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1990 (or ed.: id., *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter. Form und Funktion früher Bildtafeln der Passion*. Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1985). Belting 1994 (see note 1): 409–432. Noll, T. "Zu Begriff, Gestalt und Funktion des Andachtsbildes im späten Mittelalter." *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte,* 2004, vol. 67, no. 3, 297–328.

[31] Pliny, *Natural History,* 35.81–83.

[32] Vasari 1906 (see note 9): vol. 4, 371.

[33] Ibid., 354. Koerner 1993 (see note 1): 95–96.

The holy cloth skillfully contradicts the coarseness and opacity of the tapestry by letting other lavish textiles transpire as though seen through an Albertian *velum*.[34] The *sudarium* is inserted like an aesthetic parenthesis in the multicolored, confusing, worldly panoply of skillfully imitated silk, silver, gold, and jewels. The folded semi-transparency of the cloth enhances the metaphysical presence and consistency of the *sancta facies*. In the midst of many turning heads and folded draperies, the floating, transfigured face of the Nazarene transcends the linen picture plane. Thanks to its a-perspectival, unforeshortened, un-crinkled frontality, it suggests absolute vision and can be compared to that *eikon* of the all-seeing Christ, visible to all, which Nicolas of Cusa uses in *De visione dei* (first published around 1488) to illustrate the infinity of God, whose folding *(complicatio)* forms the world.[35] The material reality of the picture, which we share by virtue of the lady's dress overlapping the aesthetic border of the tapestry, is forcefully questioned by the diaphanous *vera icon.* Christ's humbling, total *visus* counteracts the erring, objectifying gaze of the viewer. The Holy Face, as the infinite vanishing point of the *storia* and History of Salvation, visually transfixes space and time, introducing eternity and ubiquity here and now, and *meditatio* within *narratio*. It offers a visionary glimpse into the next world, which is separated from ours only by a thin veil.[36]

The *Straus Veronica* (Fig. 2), by contrast, abstains from a narrative context and focuses on the *sudarium* presented by the saintly woman. She turns her cheerful face away slightly so as to enhance the frontality, timeless iconicity, and presence of the *sancta facies*, which looks in hieratic way past us into the endless vastness of time and space. By this subtle chiasm of perspectives, the saint signals that it is his face, not hers, which is the real subject of the picture. The undulating tassels and the highlighted ridges of the folds indicate that the *sudarium* is a loose cloth, from which the hyperreal visage of Christ emerges.

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[34] Alberti, L. B. *On Painting.* Ed. Kemp, M. Transl. Grayson, C. London: Phaidon, 1972, (2.31), 65.

[35] Nicolas of Cusa, *De visione dei*. Ed. Riemann, D. Heidelberg: Meiner, 2000, 127–138. Wolf 2002 (see note 1): 253–267. Muzj, M. G. "La Veronica e i temi della visione faccia a faccia." Frommel/Wolf 2006 (see note 1): 91–116.

[36] Cf. Wolf 1998 (see note 24). Kessler, H. L. "Face and Firmament: Dürer's *An Angel with the Sudarium* and the Limit of Vision." Frommel/Wolf 2006 (see note 1): 143–165. Lentes, T. "*Verum corpus* und *vera imago*. Kalkulierte Bildbeziehungen in der Gregorsmesse." *Das Bild der Erscheinung. Die Gregorsmesse im Mittelalter*. Eds. Gormans, A. and Lentes, T. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2007, 13–35.

6. Flemish (Brussels), *Sudarium (Harris Sudarium),* 1510/20, weft threads, ca. 53 x 61 cm, formerly Harris Collection, current location unknown (photograph The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles 97.P.7.).

Veronica holds the wafer-thin *velum* just below her chest: her waist and her girdle clearly shine through, resulting in a superimposition of folds, shadows, and *hachures*, which competes with painting's ability to suggest transparency, as for example, in Robert Campin's *Veronica*.[37] The version of the legend according to which Christ washed and dried his face on her headscarf or veil is echoed here by the *à la mode* pleated neckpiece and by the veil itself – probably a *coiffe* with two strings –, which covers her half-loose hair under a rich bonnet.
In the *Harris Sudarium* (Fig. 6), the folds, fringes, hems, and trimmings highlight the textile character of the picture plane. The material *sudarium* is nothing but the cloth of honor, baldachin, or tabernacle of the Holy Face, which seems to hover and shine within and

[37] Robert Campin, *Saint Veronica*, circa 1430, mixed media on panel, 151.9 x 61.2 cm, Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, inv. 939B.

in front of a folded space. In the case of the *Veronica* fresco of Santa Maria Novella of 1515, Jacopo da Pontormo imagines the *sacro volto* as constituted by the folds of the *sudarium*, like the potential faces materializing in the *Pillows* of the young Dürer.[38] In the *Straus Veronica* (Fig. 2), however, the picture plane, in front of which the *figura Christi* hovers, is more explicitly a woman's garment. Veronica transmutes the veil that covers her head into a material support for the image of Christ's face. By means of the veil – that cloth which conceals – God becomes visible.[39]

The *sudarium* can be related to the curtain of the tabernacle (*Hebrews* 10:19–20), which shields the Holy of Holies and has to be transgressed by the blessed – as a symbolic passage through the body of Christ – if they are to enter the heavenly temple not made by human hands.[40]

The figure of Veronica became popular in fifteenth-century Passion plays, performances of which were sometimes interrupted by her presenting the *sudarium* to the audience.[41] The old pseudo-etymology of Veronica's name as *vera icona,* and the traditional identity of the image and its support, confirm the function of the saint as a "dispositive" of visibility. Correspondingly, the most common figure of Veronica was the mass-produced pilgrim's badge, which reduced the saint to a heraldic carrier of the shield of the universal Church of Rome.[42]

Barbara Baert has pointed to the parallels and inversions of gender in the case of the Incarnation of Christ, as expressed in textile metaphors.[43] The *Straus Veronica* exhorted its female viewers to carry the veil of *compassio* like the Cross, which surely offered potential for identification. The Virgin spinning, knitting, and sewing, embroi-

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[38] Albrecht Dürer, *Six Studies of Pillows,* 1493, pen and brown ink, 27.8 x 20.2. cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 1975.1.862. Gamboni, D. *Potential Images. Ambiguity and Indeterminacy in Modern Art*. London: Reaktion Books, 2002, 31–32.

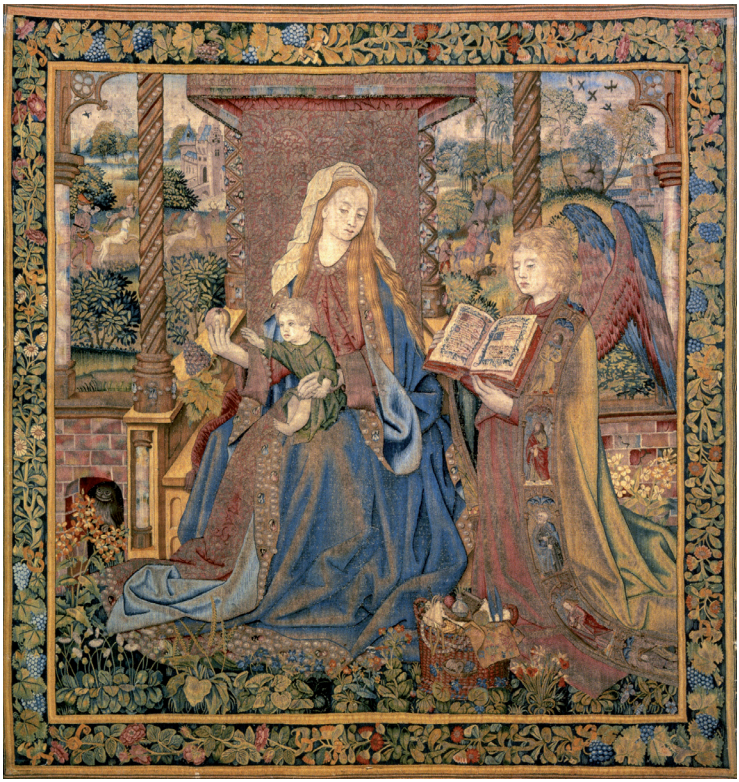
[39] See references in note 1. *Ikonologie des Zwischenraums. Der Schleier als Medium und Metapher*. Eds. Endres, J., Wittmann, B. and Wolf, G. Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2005. Rudy, K. M. and Baert, B. *Weaving, Veiling, and Dressing. Textiles and Their Metaphors in the Late Middle Ages*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.

[40] Lidov, A. "'Image-Paradigms' as a Category of Mediterranean Visual Culture." *Crossing Cultures. Conflict, Migration and Convergence*. Ed. Anderson, J. Carlton: Miegunyah Press, 2009, 177–183.

[41] E.g. Pearson 1887 (see note 22): 17.

[42] Morello, G. "'La Veronica nostra.'" *La storia dei Giubilei.* Eds. Strinati, C. et al. Rome: BNL, 1997, vol. 1, 160–167.

[43] Baert, B. "The Gendered Visage. Facets of the *Vera Icon.*" *Jaarboek, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten. Antwerp Royal Museum Annual,* 2000, 10–43.



7. Flemish (Brussels), *Mary with the Child and an Angel,* circa 1500, wool, silk, silver-gilt- and silver-wrapped weft threads, 151 x 158 cm, Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. 51985.

dering a cloth with the twelve Apostles, or weaving the temple curtain, is a visual tradition that is based on the *Proto-Gospel of Jacob* and stretches from thirteenth-century icons to Baroque paintings.[44] For example, as one Brussels tapestry shows (Fig. 7), the textile me-

[44] Wyss, R. L. "Die Handarbeiten der Maria. Eine ikonographische Studie unter Berücksichtigung der textilen Techniken." *Artes minores. Dank an Werner Abegg*. Eds. Stettler, M. and Lemberg, M. Bern: Stämpfli, 1973, 113–188. Parker, R. *The Subversive Stitch. Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*. Kent: Women's Press, 1984. Burke, M. S. "Mary with her Spools of Thread. Domesticating the Sacred Interior in Tuscan Trecento Art." *New Studies on Old Masters.* Eds. Garton, J. and Wolfthal, D. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2011, 289–307.

taphor of Incarnation proceeds from the sewing basket to the embroidered Apostles and finally from scripture to textiles: it is Mary who weaves the divine words into human flesh. Similarly, in the double portrait of "a Veronica on a Veronica" (Fig. 2) in which the male face is projected onto the female womb, the erotic and textile motifs suggest that Veronica is, in a Mariological sense, an image carrier; a matrix that makes the Logos materially visible.[45] The veil of Veronica is a *signum*, a Eucharistic banner of victory over death, her name being derived traditionally from Bernice, the bearer of victory.[46]

Concerning textility, the aspect of its textuality needs to be taken into account. The popularity of the Sancta Facies at Saint Peter's Basilica, at least up until its supposed disappearance during the Sack of Rome in 1527, was primarily due to the indulgences it promised. Under Pope Julius II, the time of penance that could be reduced by this means had reached the inflationary peak of twelve thousand years per prayer.

Moreover, any copy or representation of the Roman relic was able to harness the redemptive power of the original without the need for pilgrimage. Thus the Holy Face became ubiquitous and extraordinarily successful, for in a sense it manifested the timeless omnipresence of God through the reproduction of his earthly appearance. While the *Sancta Facies,* that Christian Gorgon, could appear with or without the cloth, as illustrated by the *Portrait of a Young Man* by Petrus Christus for instance, the meaning and efficacy of this devotional image essentially depended on the prayer *Salve sancta facies*, which was widespread from the thirteenth century on and was a necessary condition for the indulgence conferred by the image.[47] The verses testifying to a text-image relation praise the *vultus domini,* which emanates a vision of divine splendor. They attest that the face was impressed on a cloth of snow-like purity and given to Veronica as a token of love. They also characterize the *imago beata* as a mirror of sanctity that awakens when beheld and wipes away all stains of sin. Finally, they exhort the *felix figura* to lead the soul to the sight of Christ's true face and define the *vultus domini* as not having been

[45] Kruse 2003 (see note 1): 293–296.

[46] Dobschütz 1899 (see note 22): 203–222. Cf. Wolf 1998 (see note 24).

[47] Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Young Man*, circa 1450/60, oil on panel, 35.4 x 26 cm, London, The National Gallery, inv. NG2593. Hand, J. O. "*Salve Sancta Facies:* Some Thoughts on the Iconography of the *Head of Christ* by Petrus Christus." *Metropolitan Museum Journal,* 1992, vol. 27, 7–18.

depicted by human hands, neither sculpted nor polished, as God the Father, the supreme artificer, knows.[48]

Thus the issues of authorship and artistry, visibility and imagery were an integral part of the devotional context. This leads to the question of aesthetic framing. The *Straus Veronica* (Fig. 2) is set within a fictive, profiled wooden frame of the late medieval kind, which imitates a ledged window and thus alludes to the *sudarium* as a visionary opening onto heaven. Still, as in the present example, the iconography of the *vera icon* stresses the peculiarity of the textile image as a visual layer rather than a window. Correspondingly, the painterly *mise en abyme,* which usually consists of a picture within a picture, is modified in the textile medium and expressed as an image in front of an image. Moreover, taking the format of the *Straus Veronica* into account, the frame cannot be imagined as enclosing a flat mirror either. Rather, the mirrored Holy Face corresponds to the convex reflection of Christ's visage, originally captivated by and stored in the *panniculum* as mirrors were believed to be able to do, and projects the redemptive gaze back into the future. More importantly, the mount imitates a type of painting frame, which fully

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[48] Pearson 1887 (see note 22): 22–24, and Dobschütz 1899 (see note 22): 306*–309*, nr. 60: "*Salve sancta facies nostri redemptoris,/in qua nitet species divini splendoris,/impressa panniculo nivei candoris,/dataque Veronicae signum ob amoris!//*Salve vultus domini, imago beata,/ex aeterno munere mire decorata!/Lumen funde cordibus ex vi tibi data,/et a nostris sensibus tolle colligata.//Salve robur fidei nostrae christianae,/destruens haereticos, qui sunt vitae vanae!/Horum auge meritum, qui te credunt sane/illius effigiem, qui rex fit ex pane.//*Salve decus seculi speculum sanctorum,/quod videre cupiunt spiritus coelorum!/Nos ab omni macula purga vitiorum/atque nos consortio iungo beatorum.//*Salve splendor gloriae, salus peccatorum,/representans proprie regem angelorum!/Restauratrix gratiae, speculum sanctorum,/te quaerunt respicere spiritus coelorum.//*Salve nostra gloria in hac vita dura/labili et fragili, cito transitura!/Nos perduc ad patriam, o felix figura,/ ad videndam faciem, quae est Christi pura.//*Salve o sudarium nobile iocale,/et nostrum solatium et memoriale/eius, qui corpusculum assumpsit mortale,/nostrum verum gaudium et bonum finale!//Salve gemma nobilis, vera margarita,/coelicis virtutibus perfecte munita,/non depicta manibus sculpta vel polita:/hoc scit summus artifex, qui te fecit ita!//Nesciens putredinis, servans incorruptum/quod es a christicolis coram te deductum,/tu vertis in gaudium gemitum et luctum,/confer saluberrimum te videndi fructum.//Salve iubar saeculi, stella matutina!/In conspectu populi fulget lux divina,/quae est cura languidi vitae medicina./Nos in mundo labili serves a ruina.//Ille color coelicus, qui in te splendescit,/in eodem permanet statu nec decrescit;/diuturno tempore minime pallescit./Fecit te rex gloriae, fallere qui nescit.//*Esto nobis quaesumus tutum adiuvamen,/dulce refrigerium atque consolamen,/ut nobis non noceat hostil gravamen,/sed fruamur requie. Omnes dicant: amen!"* (abridged version in italics).

corresponds, for example, to that in the Berlin *Christ* after Jan van Eyck.[49] This also concerns the painted inscription, which famously runs: "As I can" and "Johannes van Eyck made and perfected me, January 31, 1438." Conceited though the wording may seem, whether as a blatant statement of divine mimetic power or as a falsely modest declaration that the image we might have taken for real is merely well crafted, it nevertheless expresses a new, lofty notion of artistic authorship.[50]

In clear contrast to this, the similar, woven inscription of the *Straus Veronica* does not immortalize its artist, but can be read as an apocalyptic reference to the lamb erecting crosses in the middle of the throne: "Ipse throni medio cruces constituit agnus. Apo."[51] It makes allusions to the Incarnation, the Passion, and the Eucharist, but also the *parousia* of the Pantocrator on the apocalyptic throne. This double temporal perspective is inherent to the *sudarium:* it is both a tangible trace of the sacrifice and an anticipation of the apocalyptic second advent of God. While the empty throne *(hetoimasia)* of the Second Coming, on which the *sudarium* is said to rest, signifies the invisible presence of Christ, the Holy Face, conversely, symbolizes his visible absence. In the tapestry, Veronica acts as the *sponsa Christi*, dressed in byssus and marrying the Lamb (*Revelation* 19:7–8). If the present tapestry served as a textile altarpiece, its Eucharistic symbolism would have been obvious: the elevation and transubstantiation of the host is mirrored, as in Saint Gregory's mass, by Veronica's presentation of the blood-soaked cloth, in which the Incarnate appears, the "effigy made of bread."[52] Hence the inscription on the tapestry exists in meaningful contrast with painters' modern inscriptions, and instead points to the true author of the Holy Face, Christ himself. On a rhetorical level, the weaver declares himself a selfless executor of God's will, a devout artisan working in a reproductive medium.

The *sudarium* is a mirror image or the expression of an imprint, which is to impress itself on the soul of the beholder without any apparent

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[49] After Jan van Eyck, *Christ*, circa 1438, oil on panel, 44 x 22 cm, Berlin, SMPK, Gemäldegalerie, inv. 528.

[50] Koerner 1993 (see note 1): 104–107.

[51] I would like to thank Darko Senekovic and Hanns Hubach for their assistance in deciphering the inscription.

[52] See note 48. Cf. Wolf 1998 (see note 24): 153–179. Walker Bynum, C. *Wonderful Blood. Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond*. Philadelphia: Penn UP, 2007. Richter, J. "*Linteamina*. Leinen als Bedeutungsträger." Böse/Tammen 2012 (see note 17): 303–321.

mediation of the part of the artist.[53] The hymn calls the last portrait of Christ a *speculum sanctorum*.[54] The *sudarium* is to Christ what Christ is to God the Father. Since flat metal mirrors were imperfect and irregular in pre-modern times, both the mortal likeness of God and, on a lower ontological level, its material counter-image only give an idea of their superior but absent models, the Incarnate and the Pantocrator respectively: "videmus nunc per speculum in enigmate tunc autem facie ad faciem" (1 *Corinthians* 13:12).[55] The Christian notion of the mirror image typified by the *sudarium* is echoed in the legend of the Byzantine textile Mandylion, which was replicated in reverse on the earthen Keramion and proliferated throughout the West with the early modern technology of printmaking, which thus contributed to the great success of the cult of Veronica.[56] Moreover, convex pre-modern glass mirrors might have influenced the idea of the *speculum* as a fish-eye *summa* of the world, the Cusan all-seeing, mirror-like icon of Christ, and the Holy Face projecting from the blurry *sudarium*. From this point of view the *sudarium* testifies to a non-Euclidian, convex/concave notion of space similar to a sculptural anamorphosis.

Concerning tapestry, the *Metropolitan Veronica* (Fig. 8) offers further material for reflection on the *sudarium*'s mirror motif. Saint Veronica is an iconic isolation and reversed appropriation of the same figure from the Dresden *Crucifixion* (Fig. 3) and reappears in other contexts and versions.[57] The saint presents the cloth of the *facies pietatis*,

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[53] Cf. Wolf, G. "The Origins of Painting." *Res. Anthropology and Aesthetics.* Autumn 1999, no. 36, 60–78, here 63. Kessler, H. L. *Seeing Medieval Art*. Peterborough: Broadview, 2004, 170.

[54] See note 48.

[55] Cf. Bieler, "Spiegel." *Handbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens.* Eds. Bächtold-Stäubli, H. and Hoffmann-Krayer, E. 10 vols., 3rd ed.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000, vol. 9, 547–577 [1st ed.: Berlin/Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter et al., 1927–1942]. Baltrušaitis, J. *Le miroir. Essai sur une légende scientifique. Révélations, science-fiction et fallacies.* Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1978. Kalas, R. "The Technology of Reflection: Renaissance Mirrors of Steel and Glass."*Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies,* 2002, vol. 32, no. 2, 519–542. Schechner, S. J. "Between Knowing and Doing: Mirrors and their Imperfections in the Renaissance." *Early Science and Medicine.* 2005, vol. 10, no. 2, 137–162.

[56] Lidov, A. "The Miracle of Reproduction: The Mandylion and Keramion as a Paradigm of the Sacred Space." Frommel/Wolf 2006 (see note 1): 17–41.

[57] Rubinstein, S. "A Saint Veronica Tapestry Panel of about 1525." *Art in America. An Illustrated Magazine.* 1920, vol. 8, no. 4, 145–147. Standen, E. A. "Vera Icon: An Early Sixteenth-Century Brussels Tapestry of Saint Veronica." *Artes textiles. Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de tapijt-, borduur- en textielkunst.* 1964, vol. 11, 65–67. Id. *European*

8. Flemish (Brussels), *Saint Veronica Holding the Sudarium (Metropolitan Veronica),* design attributed to Bernard van Orley, circa 1510, weaving attributed to the workshop of Pieter Pannemaker, circa 1520/25, wool, silk, silver-gilt and silver-wrapped weft threads, 173 x 130 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 41.190.80 (photograph The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles 97.P.7.).

Post-Medieval Tapestries and Related Hangings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 2 vols. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985, vol. 1, 74–78, here 76.

which bears her and the relic's name *Forneca,* meaning *Fronica* or *Veronica,* almost as an artist's signature. The Holy Face protrudes from the textile picture plane as much as Veronica's head overlaps the picture frame, enhancing their presence. She stands by a pond, its water reflecting a shepherd carrying a lamb. The symbol of the Savior as the good shepherd suggests that the *sudarium* reflects Christ's human appearance just as precisely and in reverse as the mirroring surface of the water above inscrutable depths. Moreover, the imprint of the emerging visage is as immaterial, intangible, and incomprehensible as the colors floating on the surface of the pool of Narcissus, who is credited by Alberti as the discoverer of painting (*inventor picturae*).[58] Similarly, in Gillis Mostaert's *Christ Carrying the Cross*, Veronica contemplates the *sudarium* laid down on the ground.[59] Tapestry, especially when woven in reverse on a low-warp frame, which was probably the case here, participates in the essential qualities of the *sudarium*. The materiality, indeed textility of Renaissance central perspective becomes apparent not only in Alberti's *velum*, which is comparable to the warps, onto which the weaver transfers the main outlines of the cartoon as he sees them through the threads. But also Filippo Brunelleschi's first perspectival experiment is similar to low-warp weaving, inasmuch as the viewer checks the correspondence between the model and its mirror-reproduction with the aid of a mirror held in-between them, viewed from behind and through the picture.[60]

To conclude, the *sudarium* seems to have become, around 1500, a privileged subject for a *paragone* between the art of weaving and

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[58] Alberti 1972 (see note 34): (2.26), 61. Cf. Wolf, G. "'Arte superficiem illam fontis amplecti'. Alberti, Narziss und die Erfindung der Malerei." *Diletto e maraviglia. Ausdruck und Wirkung in der Kunst von der Renaissance bis zum Barock*. Eds. Göttler, C. et al.; Emsdetten/Berlin: Edition Imorde, 1998, 10–39. Alberti, L. B. *Das Standbild – Die Malkunst – Grundlagen der Malerei. De statua – De pictura – Elementa picturae.* Eds. Bätschmann, O. et al. Darmstadt: WBG, 2000, 237; Bätschmann now translates "inventor picturae" as "discoverer of the image" (oral comm. 2014). Wolf 2002 (see note 1): 201–272, and Kruse 2003 (note 1): 307–343. Riedmatten, H. de. *Narcisse en eaux troubles. Francis Bacon, Bill Viola, Jeff Wall*. Forew. Stoichita, V. I. Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, 2011. Kapustka, M. "Das Heilige Antlitz auf dem Hemd. Zur indexikalischen Bedeutung des Gewandes für die Bildfläche." Böse/Tammen 2012 (see note 17): 353–372, here 367.

[59] Gillis Mostaert, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, 1578, oil on panel, 17.4 x 14.2 cm, Brussels, Musées royaux des beaux-arts de Belgique, inv. 10825.

[60] Manetti, A. *Vita di Filippo Brunelleschi.* Ed. Perrone, C. Rome: Salerno, 1992, 55–57.

the other visual arts, especially the leading medium of painting. The textile *Veronicas* analyzed here suggest that the tapestry designers and weavers performed both a theological and an aesthetic reflection on the textile medium, which comprises characteristics such as the mirrored reproduction, a reduced notion of artistic authorship, the authenticating artlessness of the textile labor, or the merging of image and support.[61] By this stratagem, tapestry presented itself as the medium, which was closest and most appropriate to that precise textile and theological paradigm of the Christian image, the Holy Face.

One last piece with equally fundamental iconography shall exemplify the identity of tapestry in relation to painting. Before or perhaps because Rogier van Weyden's *Saint Luke Drawing the Virgin* (Fig. 9) left Brussels for the Escorial sometime after 1520, it was reproduced as a tapestry (Fig. 10).[62] However, unlike several painters before them, the cartoon designers and weavers did not make a slavish copy of the painting. Rather, they provided a programmatic and "paragonal" translation of that "icon" of the new art of painting into the language of the textile medium, speaking in favor of its specific qualities.

Firstly, the size of the model was doubled, scale being essential for a conspicuously costly, labor-intensive, two-dimensional medium, which was valued by its own trading measures and outshone all painting in terms of value per square ell.

Secondly, the tapestry shows quantitatively more as a result – more being more in terms of pre-modern materialist aesthetics. Driven by a *voluptas plenitudinis,* earth and sky are filled with an ornamental, flattening texture, a profusion of tapestry-specific details such as tufts of flowers, plants, bushes, and trees. And this is typically facilitated by a raising of the horizon line. Tapestry not only proves that it can match the *mimesis* and self-effacement of painting by imitating other materi-

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[61] Cf. Reudenbach, B. "Authentizitätsverheissung im mittelalterlichen Reliquienkult und der Gegenwartskunst." *Zeitenspiegelungen. Zur Bedeutung von Traditionen in Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft. Festschrift für Konrad Hoffmann zum 60. Geburtstag am 8. Oktober 1998*. Eds. Klein, P. K. and Prange, R. Berlin: Reimer, 1998, 375–385.

[62] Panofsky, E. *Early Netherlandish Painting. Its Origins and Character*. 2 vols. Cambridge/Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1953, vol. 1, 251–256. Kraut, G. *Lukas malt die Madonna. Zeugnisse zum künstlerischen Selbstverständnis in der Malerei*. Worms: Werner, 1986, 13–26. Belting, H. and Kruse, C. *Die Erfindung des Gemäldes. Das erste Jahrhundert der niederländischen Malerei*. Munich: Hirmer, 1994, 31–32. *Rogier van der Weyden. St. Luke Drawing the Virgin. Selected Essays in Context.* Ed. Purtle, C. J. Turnhout: Brepols, 1997. Rapp Buri, A. and Stucky-Schürer, M. *Burgundische Tapisserien*. Munich: Hirmer, 2001, 410–412. Kruse 2003 (see note 1): 225–268.

als and visual arts, it also does so in a richer way: with more colored marbles, more details carved in the wood, more variety in the floor tiles, clearer reflections in the water, more diaphanous and stained-glass windows, a larger picture plane for the architectural framework, many more people and buildings crowding the cityscape, more writing and illumination, large still lifes with all sort of *naturalia* and *artificalia,* minute genre scenes – simply more for the eye's tactile pleasure in inspecting material imitations of other materials.

Thirdly, tapestry can expose its own, textile medium in an even more persistent and varied way than painting: richer, more ornamented fabrics show more folds and pleats, thus enhancing the complexity of the relief texture. The tapestry stresses the functions of textiles by enlarging, multiplying, and richly decorating the cushions that line Mary's porphyry-red canopy and underline the function of textiles, be they clothes, cushions, or baldachins, as a visual and spatial means of display and representation. The added peacock stands for the textile image, which is largely made up of iridescent colors, tapestry consisting of incarnate *colore* without *disegno*.

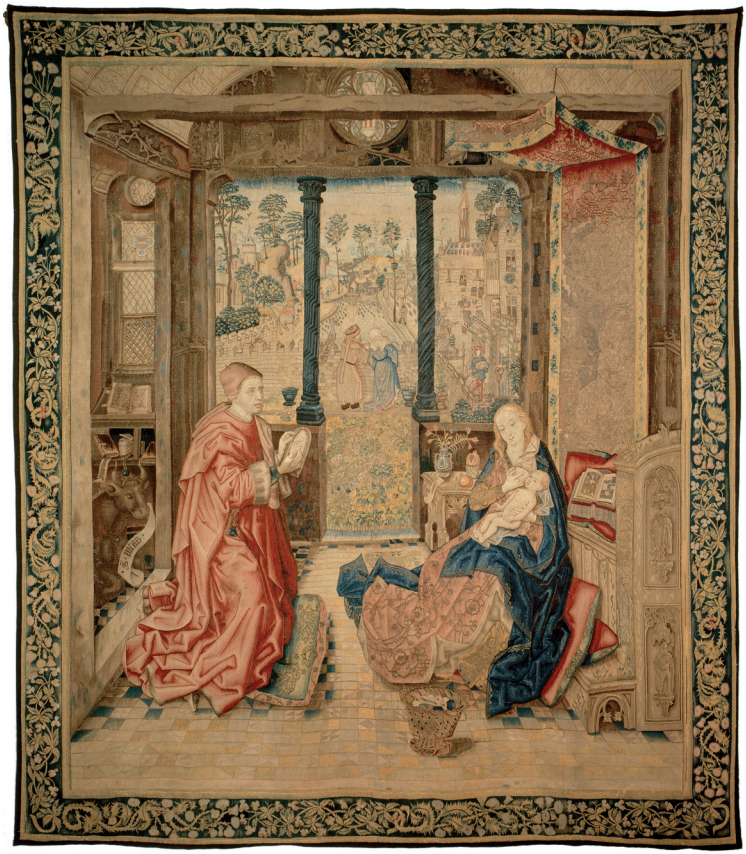
Fourthly, in competition with painting theory, tapestry is aware of its aesthetic limits, which it turns into a virtue. A costly medium does not deny itself; on the contrary, it stresses opacity and flatness instead of transparency and depth. Consequently, the open "painterly" window is replaced by a wooden "textile" trellis and stained glass. The tapestry represents and incorporates its own floral frame, which fully adapts to the flexibility of the picture.

Fifthly, tapestry is able to reflect on its own modes of production: Rogier's painting was intentionally mirrored, because, in the tapestry, despite the volte-face of the whole composition, the Evangelist is still holding the pencil in his right hand. Reversing the composition by interleaving an inverted cartoon between model and the correct textile reproduction is a specificity of the low-warp weaving technique (*basse-lisse*). While distinguishing low-warp from high-warp tapestries *post factum* seems almost impossible, the present double turnaround, conversely, suggests a reflection on this very procedure. By reproducing a famous painting in reverse, inversion is here made visible and declared to be a condition for modern low-warp textile image making. Compared to Saint Luke's drawing and painting, which merely counterfeit the Incarnate with human hands, the textile medium, issuing from the anonymous work of *petites mains*, instead refers to its theological *Ursprungsmythos* of the *sudarium* and proves its greater, essential authenticity by indexical inversion.

9. Rogier van der Weyden, *Saint Luke Drawing the Virgin*, about 1435/40, oil and tempera on panel, 137.5 x 110.8 cm, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 93.153 (photograph Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

Both by inversion and detailing, the tapestry reintroduces van Eyck's older vocabulary and fuses his slightly earlier *Rolin Madonna* with Rogier's *Saint Luke* so as to widen the tapestry's representativeness for the Flemish visual arts.[63]

[63] Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin*, 1434/35, oil on panel, 66 x 62 cm, Paris, musée du Louvre, inv. 1271.



10. Flemish (Brussels), after Rogier van der Weyden, *Saint Luke Drawing the Virgin,* before 1520, wool, silk, silver-gilt and silver-wrapped weft threads, 300 x 260 cm, Paris, musée du Louvre, département des objets d'art, inv. OA3999 (photograph musée du Louvre).

Finally, the textile image also contests newly established Eyckian notions of artistic authorship. Whereas Saint Luke, as an exemplary artisan and author, stands for the guild, which commissioned the altarpiece as much as the virtuous painter of the altarpiece, the tapestry is a collective work and, in this case, a reproductive work, which makes no claim to individual authorship. In the tapestry, Luke, the saintly patron of painters, is relegated from the position of a draftsman, who can produce any visual artifact by *disegno*, to that of a

painter, his sheet of paper or vellum being replaced by a wooden panel; a change of attribute, which acts as a subtle *repoussoir* of painting within the tapestry. Indeed, according to one legend, Luke failed to portray Christ when requested to do so by Veronica, who then received the imprint of the face on a cloth after interceding with Christ directly.[64] *Maria lactans* is set between a book of hours showing the Redeemer and symbols of her own virginity such as the lily and the pomegranate, which are repeated in the pattern of the canopy. More importantly, a woven sewing basket filled with clews of thread and a pair of scissors was added and set in a prominent position in front of the Mother of God. Here, an inversion of media and gender becomes manifest. The relationship and hierarchy between painting and tapestry, artistic model and textile execution, appears to be overturned, for Saint Luke is shown representing and imitating the exemplary and ultimate female textile artist, who, second only to God, wove and sewed the Logos into living flesh.

[64] Pearson 1887 (see note 22): 11, and Dobschütz 1899 (see note 22), 249.